

State Celebrates 'World Spay Day' With Free Spay/Neuter Surgeries

WILMINGTON – On February 23, more than 150 large-breed dogs and free-roaming cats received free spay or neuter surgeries compliments of the Division of Public Health's Office of Animal Welfare (OAW). The mass spay/neuter event was held in conjunction with World Spay Day.

Delaware's Spay Day activities took place in all three counties. The event was aimed at assisting owners of large-breed dogs and those who care for free-roaming cats. These are two groups of animals that experience high rates of homelessness in Delaware, according to OAW Executive Director Hetti Brown.

"Spaying animals is vital to reducing unwanted litters and may help keep those animals healthy," Brown said. "OAW is grateful to the many participants in Spay Day, including those agencies offering the free clinics. Thank you, too, to all the Delawareans who have purchased the Animal Welfare license plate. Revenue from sales of the Animal Welfare License Plate helped to fund these surgeries."

While low-cost spay and neuter services are available in Delaware, the procedure can still be cost-prohibitive for some families. So Delaware's Spay Day activities were funded by the Animal Welfare License Plate Fund. The Fund is used for pet populations not served through the state Spay & Neuter Program, which provides low-cost spay and neuter surgeries for Delawareans on qualifying public assistance.

The spay and neuter surgeries were performed at seven locations: the Delaware Humane Association and Faithful Friends Animal Society, both in Wilmington, the Brandywine

Valley SPCA in New Castle, the Spay Neuter Clinic in Dover, First State Animal Center & SPCA in Camden, Seaford Animal Hospital in Seaford and Crossroads Animal Hospital in Selbyville. Animals sterilized during the State Spay Day also received a rabies vaccination, if needed. Appointments were scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Spaying female cats and dogs reduces their chances of developing pyometra (a fatal uterine infection), uterine cancer, and other reproductive system cancers, according to The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Male neutered pets have less risk of getting testicular cancer and possibly prostate cancer. In addition, dogs and cats that are spayed and neutered are less likely to mark their territories with urine, bite, roam, bark and howl, and are less aggressive.

Revenue for the Animal Welfare License Plate Fund is generated through sales of the Animal Welfare License Plate. The license plate was first launched in 1995 and was re-launched in 2015 with a new design. The Animal Welfare License Plate is available for \$50 through the Division of Motor Vehicles. Of every purchase, \$35 goes toward services for animals in Delaware. To purchase the license plate, go to <http://de.gov/pawplate> or visit any Delaware DMV location. For more information about World Spay Day, go to www.worldspayday.org.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.